

# Safetygram

NCI-Frederick

ISM-214

General

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## Refuge from a Tornado

Maryland typically experiences several potentially deadly tornadoes every year. Some may have winds in excess of 200 miles per hour and can destroy anything in its path. Many hit in sparsely populated areas and cause little or no damage, but some hit population centers and cause major damage, injuries, and death. In recent years, notable Maryland tornadoes have caused casualties or significant damage in LaPlata and the College Park-Beltsville-Calverton area.

Tornadoes often spring up when warm and cold air masses collide - conditions similar to those that create severe thunderstorms. In Maryland, the most common time of year for tornadoes is April through November. Most occur between 3 p.m. and 9 p.m.

Considering this information, it is important to have a plan in the event you need to seek refuge from an approaching tornado. EHS recommends that all employees know and follow the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) guidance for seeking refuge from a tornado. The FEMA guidance is:

- Get out of vehicles and trailers.
- Seek refuge on the lowest level of a substantial building in an interior room or hallway toward the center of the building.
- Avoid exterior walls and the corners of the building to minimize the chance of injury by flying debris - the cause of most tornado-related injuries.
- Stay away from exterior doors - they may open unexpectedly.
- Stay away from windows - glass may break without warning.

When you seek refuge from a tornado at work, take these things with you if readily available:

- Office and house keys, driver's license, PIV or ID cards
- Battery-operated AM / FM radio – tune to 99.9 or 103.1 FM for local emergency information

For additional information, consult the FEMA web site at [www.ready.gov/tornadoes](http://www.ready.gov/tornadoes). If you have any questions concerning refuge from a tornado call EHS at x1451.

### References

Tornadoes – Federal Emergency Management Agency. Retrieved from <http://www.ready.gov/tornadoes>

Tornadoes – Maryland Emergency Management Agency. Retrieved from <http://memm.maryland.gov/prepared/Pages/tornadoes.aspx>